

Amendments to the Claims:

Please replace the existing listing of claims with the following:

1. (currently amended): In a communications system having a group of interface devices configured with the same functionality for assembling messages transmitted as sequences of data packets from within a coverage area of a wireless communications network, a method for assembling a message from a sequence of data packets, including:

receiving at one interface device of the group of interface devices from the wireless communications network at least one data packet of a sequence of data packets that collectively form a message;

determining if the at least one data packet meets a predetermined criteria based on the location of the at least one data packet in the sequence of data packets, and if so sending out a request to the other interface devices of the group for any data packets of the sequence received by the other interface devices and receiving at the one interface device any data packets sent by the other interface devices in response to the request; and

assembling the data packets of the sequence into the message at the one interface device.

2. (original): The method of claim 1 including, prior to sending out the request, determining if the one interface device has received all the data packets of the sequence, wherein the request to the other interface devices is sent out only if a determination is made that the one interface device has not received all the data packets of the sequence,

3. (original): The method of claim 2 wherein the predetermined criteria is that the at least one data packet is the final data packet in the sequence.

4. (original): The method of claim 1 wherein the group of interface devices are distributed computers connected by a wired network across which the request is

sent.

5. (original): The method of claim 4 wherein the request includes an interface device identifier identifying the one interface device and a sequence identifier identifying the sequence.

6. (original): The method of claim 1 wherein each data packet of the sequence includes information associating the data packet with the message and information indicating a location of the data packet within the sequence, wherein the criteria is based on a location of the at least one data packet within the sequence.

7. (original): The method of claim 1 including monitoring at the other interface devices of the group for the request and in reply thereto sending to the one interface device any data packets for the sequence received at the other interface devices.

8. (original): The method of claim 1 including monitoring at the one interface device for a request from any of the other interface devices of the group for data packets of a requested sequence, and sending any data packets of the requested sequence received by the one interface device to a requesting one of the other interface devices of the group.

9. (original): The method of claim 1 wherein the coverage area is a substantially continuous geographic area.

10. (original): The method of claim 1 wherein the coverage area includes a plurality of geographically dispersed areas.

11. (currently amended): An interface device comprising one of a group of interface devices, for receiving messages transmitted as sequences of data packets from within a coverage area of a wireless communications network, the group of

interface devices being coupled to a gateway network for communicating there between, each of the interface devices in the group of interface devices configured with the same functionality, the interface device including a message assembler for determining if the interface device should assemble a message for a sequence of data packets of which the interface device has received at least one data packet, based on whether the interface device has received a data packet having a predetermined location in the sequence of data packets, and if so sending out a request for any missing data packets to the other interface devices in the group over the gateway network and assembling the message upon receiving the missing data packets.

wherein the message assembler ~~of each interface device~~ determines if the interface device should assemble the message based on whether the interface device has received a data packet having a predetermined location in the sequence of data packets.

12. (previously presented): The Interface device of claim 11 wherein each data packet sent over the wireless network is directed to the interface device.

13. (cancelled):

14. (previously presented): The interface device of claim 11 wherein the predetermined location is a last location in the sequence of data packets.

15. (previously presented): The interface device of claim 11 wherein the message assembler of the interface device monitors for a request for missing data packets of a sequence from other interface devices in the group and upon receipt thereof sends over the gateway network to the requesting interface device any missing data packets of the sequence that have been received thereby.

16. (cancelled)

17. (previously presented): The interface device of claim 11 wherein the interface device and the other interface devices have a respective dedicated communications channel on the gateway network for communicating requests for missing packets.

18. (previously presented): The interface device of claim 11 further including a wireless network adaptor associated with the interface device for converting data packets received from the coverage area from a first protocol to a second protocol suitable for the interface device.

19. (previously presented): The interface device of claim 11 wherein the coverage area is a substantially continuous geographic area.

20. (previously presented): The interface device of claim 11 wherein the coverage area includes a plurality of geographically dispersed areas.

21. (currently amended): A communications system comprising a gateway network and a group of interface devices configured with the same functionality including the interface device according to claim 11.

22. (new): The method of claim 1 wherein each interface device in the group of interface devices operates in the same network layer.